

### *Voices Support for Social Security Assistance for New Mexico Seniors*

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Las Cruces, NM – This week, Harry Teague was recognized as a “Champion Fighting to Defend and Strengthen Social Security” by Social Security Works for his efforts to protect the program from privatization and to defend the rights of New Mexicans who rely on Social Security benefits.

“Social Security was created as a promise to our seniors that they will be entitled to life’s basic necessities like shelter, food and healthcare. These hardworking Americans invested in Social Security to secure their future, and they deserve to receive these benefits,” said Teague, who worked with 135 members of Congress to [send a letter](#) to President Obama demanding no cutbacks to Social Security.

Social Security Works’ “Strengthen Social Security Campaign” is a coalition of over 215 state and national organizations representing 50 million members. The organization released a “Social Security Works for New Mexico” report which found that 117,610 retirees, veterans, disabled workers and children received Social Security benefits across southern New Mexico in 2008, injecting \$1.3 billion into the local economy.

Harry Teague also announced today that he will continue his efforts to preserve social security for the hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans that rely on Social Security with his support for the Seniors Protection Act. The bill would provide a one-time \$250 payment to the over 300,000 seniors, veterans and people with disabilities across New Mexico eligible for Social Security. On Friday, the Social Security Administration announced that, for the first time ever, there will be no automatic Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for a second consecutive year.

“New Mexicans living on fixed incomes and with disabilities have been hit especially hard in this economy and this \$250 will enable them to pay for essentials and, in turn, support New Mexico's economy,” said Harry Teague. “I am committed to acting quickly to help our seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities who receive Social Security make ends meet.”

The COLA is automatically calculated using data on inflation published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). October 15 is the day BLS releases the final economic factor that the Social Security Administration uses to calculate the annual COLA. In 2009, Social Security recipients saw a 5.8% increase in their benefits, the largest since 1982, as a result of rising costs; but in 2010, they saw no COLA at all.

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